

An Admirable Article.

In connection with this subject, of the Sixty-Surgeon bill, the administration of the Pension Office, soldiers, attorneys, &c., we publish the following editorial from that able and influential journal, called "The Nation," published in New York city. The soldiers of the country owe this writer a deep feeling of gratitude for the interest he exhibits, as their defender, against wrong and outrage, by one who should be their protector.

But to the "Nation's" article. Its editor says:

It is certainly our object, as Mr. Bentley supposes, to benefit and not injure the Pension Office, but we do not think that this is to be accomplished by covering up its shortcomings. As to the responsibility for the law of June, 1878, reducing the fee to agents and directing that their fees should no longer be reserved for them, Mr. Bentley expressly stated in his address (referring especially to the latter point) that the law was recommended by him. The debate to which he refers shows that the bill of the Committee on Invalid Pensions fixed the fee at \$25, and that on an amendment from Mr. Fuller this was reduced to \$10. It was understood at the time that the final bill, and also the provision in the Arrears Law forbidding any fee to agents in arrears applications, met Mr. Bentley's approval; and this is strengthened by the opinion, openly expressed in his address, that claim agents are altogether unnecessary. This notion is, we are sure, a very mistaken one. Not one in ten of these applicants can even write an intelligible letter about his case; there is no class that needs the assistance of counsel more. As to whether respectable lawyers are prevented from appearing before the Pension Office by the inadequacy of the compensation, we think that Mr. Bentley can easily satisfy himself by enquiry among lawyers, and that the reply will be unanimous. In the arrears applications, in which no agent's fee was allowed, a large part of the work was done by "shysters," who took it because they had no reputation to imperil and charged twice as much as the work was worth. The idea that these applications, each of which involved nearly as much work as an ordinary deed, could be drawn by the illiterate applicants themselves, or by lawyers who would not wish to be paid, was surely ill-considered, and only resulted in throwing the applications into improper hands. The worst feature of the law of June was, however, the abandonment of the old system of securing attorney's fees. The innovation did and could do no good to honest pensioners; it only operated to enable the dishonest ones to cheat their agents. To make the claim-agent's business insecure, by encouraging fraud at his expense, is its sole object; and this law Mr. Bentley acknowledges as especially his own device.

We are glad to hear that any system was used in taking up the arrears cases, even one as imperfect as that described. In several of the cases that passed through most rapidly the applicants openly attributed their success to illicit outside influence, and the plan adopted seems especially open to that danger, and with little or no excuse in fancied difference in the intelligence of applicants. Still, it was certainly better than no method at all. The blunders and delays of the Pension Office are far more numerous and serious than Mr. Bentley admits. Careless requirements of impossible evidence, and delays of many months in examining the evidence submitted, seem altogether indefensible, yet both are extremely frequent, and the difficulty seems to lie deeper. There is an actual hostility to the applicant, shown in refusing to furnish him with copies of papers filed and official records necessary to complete his case; and frequently his case is rejected on the secret report of a special agent, which is not communicated to him, so that he is forced to fight in the dark against unknown charges. We have good reason to believe that the number of deserving claims improperly rejected by the office is many times greater than the fraudulent ones that have gone through, which last, we think, have been greatly exaggerated. The talk about ten per cent. of the pensions being improperly obtained is the wildest guess-work.

With regard to Mr. Bentley's plan of traveling commissions of enquiry, it has been repeatedly before Congress and always rejected, and we do not think Mr. Bentley has any reason for charging in his address that the opposition to it has been "based upon a misunderstanding of its features, or consisted in the baldest misrepresentation." The plan was offered in the Senate last March, for example, and Senator Edmunds, Thurman, Voorhees, and others took part in the discussion, with scarcely a syllable in its favor, Mr. Shields styling it a sham that deserved a leather medal. It was there pointed out that this new commission (whose only duty is to make up a case for examination by the Government, a labor which should be done by the applicant's attorney) would not help the soldiers at all, but, on the contrary, would delay them greatly in waiting for semi-annual visits of the commission, and cause them great hardship in bringing their witnesses before the distant courts, most of them being very poor, besides serious minor difficulties. And on the Government side it would double the expenses of the Pension Office without any corresponding benefit; for the two great difficulties in the office are the delays in taking up the cases and the inability to deal with them judiciously when reached, and both of these evils would be aggravated. The time spent in accumulating evidence would manifestly be increased; and as the depositions would be filed not in their present condensed and pointed form but in the shape of a long and confused verbatim report of oral examination, it would be idle to expect the office to unravel them, while nearly all the advantage of oral examination would be lost by not bestowing on the examining board any power of decision. It seems plain, therefore, that the present evils would be increased.

The Secretary of the Interior has reported that these evils do not arise from the want of additional clerical force, but from the incompetence of that employed; and Mr. Bentley seems to admit as much in his address. The remedy for them need not be sought, then, in anomalous and expensive commissions: it is right at Mr. Bentley's elbow. He has only to replace the incompetents under him by men of legal training and acumen, to lengthen his men's office hours, and in short to do what ordinary business men do when their business is not kept properly in hand, and he will find that the present evils will vanish. In cases where affidavits of importance seem suspicious, he can send one of the special agents now employed to examine

the affiant before a magistrate after notice to the applicant's attorney, and thus without any of the cumbrous machinery of the new bill or the underhand, irresponsible spying now adopted reach the desired end. First of all, however, the Commissioner should understand that he is the almoner of the Government, not the enemy of the pensioners; and that the poverty-stricken suitor at his office is ill-treated if he does not have every advantage of counsel, of knowing the evidence against him, and of a competent judicial decision of his case.

The Equalization Bounty Petitions.

Let one go from every County in the United States where there are Union Soldiers. The following is a proper form which we will send you on receipt of stamp. We have forwarded many already. In large cities the petition should be kept at a particular locality, and soldiers should be informed by advertisement where it is to be found. Remember that in this world of ours *if you want money due you, you must generally ask for it.*

PETITION.

To the Honorable Senate and House of Representatives in Congress assembled:

The petition of the soldiers who served in the Union Army, during the War of the Rebellion, respectfully represents:

That, whereas, it is conceded that the passage of what is known as the Equalization Bounty Bill is a measure of justice, recognized already by its passage several times in the House of Representatives, and the present is the opportune time to pass this bill, for the Treasury is overflowing with funds, which could be devoted to no nobler purpose than to discharge an obligation to the men who in its hour of need stepped forward to save it from destruction; we therefore beg of your honorable bodies most respectfully yet earnestly and without delay to pass this bill and thus perform an act for which you will ever merit our thanks and gratitude. And your memorialists will ever pray.

NAMES	POST OFFICE	STATE	COMPANY	REGIMENT

Copy of above sent to any address upon receipt of one three cent stamp.

The Tribune "Boom."

The word "boom" is nowadays very frequently applied in association with forwarding the interests of certain men or measures. Now, soldiers, what do you say to a real NATIONAL TRIBUNE boom this fall and winter? You all know we are laboring constantly and faithfully in your behalf. Then let each subscriber feel it to be his duty to obtain at least three or four additional names for our list. Specially would we speak to all who have received the blank Equalization Bounty Petition. They will see very many soldiers and can speak of the merits of *The Soldiers' Paper*. Our paper this fall and winter will be full of interest for all soldiers and every family circle.

Another Premium.

For \$1 we will send you THE NATIONAL TRIBUNE for one year, and the American Illustrated Pronouncing Dictionary, just published, beautifully bound, containing 25,000 words, with Greek and Latin phrases, proverbs and quotations, abbreviations used in the arts, sciences, and literature, and other information of value. One of these beautiful and valuable books and a copy of our paper for one year will be sent to anyone who will send \$10 for the ten papers and dictionaries, but, as aforesaid, \$1 forwarded us will secure to any individual the book and paper.

The Statue of General Thomas.

This beautiful work of art which we publish this month would make a handsome ornament for any room in the dwelling. Cut it out close around the border of the engraving and paste it smoothly upon a white card board sheet. Let there be a margin of about two inches between the frame and the picture. The glass and frame will cost but a trifle.

The Democratic Organ on the Bentley Bill.

The *Post*, of Washington, D. C., is recognized as the able organ of the Democracy of this country, and we are pleased to read the following opinion in its editorial columns:

The ex-soldiers all over the country are very emphatic in their denunciation of Commissioner Bentley's scheme for dividing the States into sixty districts, and appointing sixty lawyers and sixty doctors to harass pensioners. The proposition is to constitute a lawyer and doctor a court to examine any pensioner or applicant as often as they please. They can make him spend all his time going to and from their place of business, can call him from his

home every day or week in the year. The power proposed to be thus placed would be almost unlimited. As a bulldozing machine and a political farce, this bill, should it become a law, would be literally immense. But it must not become a law.

Hooker and Chandler Gone.

Our readers, perhaps, will generally have heard, ere this number of our paper reaches them, of the death of Major General Joseph Hooker and Senator Zach. Chandler. Each was over sixty-six years of age. General Hooker had been an invalid for several years, but "Old Zach" was full of energy to the last. Both died suddenly, the former at his home on Long Island, in the midst of his family, the latter was found dead, upon his bed, at a Chicago hotel. The remains of each were lying in state, November 5, and were viewed by thousands of people, the General at the City Hall of New York the Senator at the City Hall of Detroit. The names of both will be favorably chronicled by the future historian. They were honest in their convictions of duty and devoted to the interests of Liberty and Union.

The boast of heraldry, the pomp of power,
And all that beauty, all that wealth e'er gave
Awaits alike the inevitable hour.
The path of glory leads but to the grave.

A Soldier's Beautiful Letter.

In a previous number of THE TRIBUNE, we adverted to the letters written by soldiers, during the war, to relatives and friends at home. A few days ago, we incidentally came upon the following which so abounds in natural pathos, as to excite feelings, too deep for utterance. The noble fellow who wrote it belonged to a Pennsylvania regiment and his orthography indicates him to be of German origin. The Germans are regarded as being of a phlegmatic nature, but no people are more devoted in their patriotism or more dearly love their kindred and friends:

PETERSBURG, VA., June 25, 1864.

DEAR FATHER AND MOTHER:

I did write a letter to you yesterday and said in that letter that I and Lewis *where* both well at present, but when I came up to the company at dinner time with soup for the company, they had Lewis laying dead in the rifle-pit, and he was shot from a rebel sharpshooter, while he was *setting* in the rifle-pit with the other boys in the morning about 8 o'clock. He was shot June 22, right in the head and was right dead—he *coulden* speak no more—he fell on the ground and I staid out with him till night and then we *bieried* him nice at a nice place in the woods. Samuel Eckrot, Frank Keonig, William Bels, Benjamin Dreibellries and me carried him out at the woods and Captain helped to *bieried* him. Mother he is *bieried* nice, and you can't get him home at present, and you better not *dry* to fetch him home, for if you get him home you cant see how he looks—he was all over black, before we *bieried* him. *Doned* fetch him home—leave him *bieried* here where he is *bieried*. I took it very *hart* when I seen him laying on the ground, but I hope he is with Lucy in Heaven, where there is no more rebels and no trouble and I hope you will not take it *hart* that you cant see him and Lucy no more—we will take it as easy as we can—we hope that they are both at a good place and we will pray for them so that we may meet them one day or *nuther*. Mother take it easy—dont take it so *hart*. I did *bieried* him nice—he died easy, he didned find much out of his death. I must come to a close by saying I am well at present.

Your loving son,

J. M. 48 Pa Reg.

"A Small-Tail Movement."

The Presidential canvass in 1840, in which General Harrison and President Van Buren were opposing candidates, was distinguished by an intense popular enthusiasm. It was an oratorical and musical campaign. Every village had its dozen of speakers and a score of vocalists. An amusing anecdote of that election gives a modern illustration of the old fable of the lion put to flight by the braying of a jackass.

A speaker was discussing at a mass meeting in Western Virginia upon the merits of Gen. Harrison, as a military commander. Suddenly a tall, gaunt man arose, and in a shrill voice that pierced through the crowd, called out:

"Mister! mister! I want to ax a question!"

"I shall be happy to answer any question, if I can, replied the orator.

"We are told, fellow-citizens," said the quaint man, addressing the crowd, "that General Harrison is a mighty great general; but I say he is one of the meanest sort of generals. We are told that he defended himself bravely at Fort Meigs; but I tell you that on that occasion he was guilty of the *Small-Tail Movement*, and I challenge the speaker to deny it!"

"I don't know, my friend," replied the orator, "what you mean by the 'Small-Tail Movement.'"

"I'll tell you!" said the quaint man. "I've got it here in black and white. Here is Quinshaw's History of the United States,"—holding up the book—"and I'll read what it says: 'At this critical moment, Gen. Harrison executed a *novel* movement.' Does the gentleman deny that statement?"

"No, go on."

"Well he executed 'a *novel* movement.' Now here's 'Johnson's Dictionary'—taking a small book out of his pocket—and it says, 'NOVEL, a small tale.' This was the kind of a movement General Harrison was guilty of. Now, I'm no soger, and don't know much of military tactics—but this I do say, a man who in the face of the enemy, is guilty of a '*Small-Tail Movement*' is not a fit man to be President of the United States, and he shan't have my vote."

And he didn't, nor the vote of the village.